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Assessment of progress made on the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared to contribute to the assessment by the United Nations Forum on Forests of progress made in implementing the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (forest instrument) and towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests. Specifically, the report consolidates and analyses information provided in 16 voluntary national reports, and presents actions taken, challenges encountered and lessons learned, as well as information that can be used in future reporting. An exemplary pilot project on the implementation of the forest instrument in Ghana, showcasing actions to determine priorities and analyse gaps, strengths and weaknesses, and other measures to address identified challenges are described. The report also draws on other sources of information, including the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and inputs provided by regional and subregional entities. National reports indicate that many countries, building on existing efforts, have introduced or strengthened policy, institutional and normative measures and other actions that support the implementation of the forest instrument and its four global objectives, while others are in the process of doing so.

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Reports also indicate the continued usefulness of existing forest policy frameworks and strategies, such as national forest programmes, for sustainable forest management, as well as the benefits of the forest instrument as an overarching framework for ongoing and enhanced activities. Nevertheless, developing countries in particular identified challenges encountered, especially resource constraints. In that regard, a number of initiatives are planned or under way to assist countries with future voluntary reporting to the Forum.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report responds to United Nations Forum on Forests resolution 7/1, specifically paragraphs 19 and 20 of the annex thereto, in which the Secretary-General is requested to prepare an analytical report for the ninth session of the Forum to help the Forum assess overall progress made on the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (hereinafter also referred to as the forest instrument) and towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests. It analyses and consolidates information presented in national reports and provides information that can be used in future reporting.

2. At the time of reporting, voluntary national information had been submitted by 16 Member States. An exemplary pilot project on the implementation of the forest instrument in Ghana is highlighted in order to showcase the steps taken to determine priorities and analyse gaps, strengths and weaknesses, as well as other measures to address identified challenges. In addition, information contained in the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and inputs provided by 15 regional and subregional entities, were considered in the preparation of the present report.

II. Relevant Forum decisions

Global objectives on forests and the forest instrument

3. With a view to attaining the main objective of the international arrangement on forests and enhancing the contribution of forests to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the Economic and Social Council, by its resolution 2006/49, adopted the four global objectives on forests, as follows, agreeing to work globally and nationally to achieve progress towards their attainment by 2015:

(a) Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation;

(b) Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people;

(c) Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests;

(d) Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management.

4. In December 2007, by its resolution 62/98, the General Assembly adopted the forest instrument,[1] declaring that it had the following purpose:

[1] The forest instrument was adopted by the Forum at its seventh session (see E/CN.18/2007/8 and Corr.1).

(a) To strengthen political commitment and action at all levels to implement effectively sustainable management of all types of forests and to achieve the shared global objectives on forests;

(b) To enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in particular with respect to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability;

(c) To provide a framework for national action and international cooperation.[2]

5. In paragraph 5 of the instrument, Member States reaffirm their commitment to work at all levels to make progress towards the attainment of the four objectives by 2015. Moreover, paragraphs 6 and 7 of the instrument identify, respectively, 25 national policies and measures and 19 actions related to international cooperation and means of implementation to fulfil the instrument's purpose. Therefore, the implementation of the instrument can be a means to attain the four global objectives. The monitoring and assessment of progress, together with the voluntary submission of national progress reports as part of regular reporting to the Forum, are requested in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the instrument, respectively.

6. While the forest instrument and the global objectives on forests are sometimes referred to separately in Forum resolutions, they are inextricably linked in practice and share the aspiration to enhance sustainable forest management and the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. This point is reflected in paragraph 2 (b) (i) of the resolution entitled "Forest in a changing environment, enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination; regional and subregional inputs", adopted by the Forum at its eighth session, in which the integrated framework offered by the forest instrument is highlighted as a means to ensure coherence and avoid duplication. While there is no direct hierarchical or linear relationship between the global objectives on forests and national and international provisions contained in the instrument, paragraphs 6 and 7 can be understood to mean that the implementation of the global objectives and the forest instrument will contribute to sustainable forest management overall.

III. Status of reporting to the Forum: 2002-2010

7. From 2002 to 2005, the Forum invited Member States to submit voluntary national reports on progress made in implementing the proposals for action made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests for the corresponding sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests. Following the adoption of the forest instrument in 2007, reporting was focused on the instrument and the global objectives. Since 2002, 86 countries have submitted national reports, ranging from 14 in 2002 to 54 in 2005. Three countries[3] submitted national reports for all six sessions, with 24 countries submitting reports for between three and five sessions. However, 41 countries submitted national reports for only one of the six sessions for which they had been requested to submit reports.

[2] General Assembly resolution 62/98, annex, para. 1.

[3] Finland, Mexico and New Zealand.

8. For the Forum's eighth session, held in May 2009, 21 countries submitted progress reports. Inputs were also received from 29 regional or subregional entities and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The reports provided useful insights into actions being taken and indicated the considerable potential of the instrument as a framework. However, it was recognized that only a short time had elapsed since the adoption of the instrument.

9. To facilitate the preparation of voluntary national reports for the Forum's ninth session, the Forum secretariat circulated guidelines and a format that countries could use, as well as a survey for regional and subregional entities. At the time of reporting, 16 countries and 15 regional or subregional entities had made submissions. The fact that there has been an uneven response on the part of countries to requests for national reports is likely due to limited resources and technical capacity, as well as to the burden placed on countries by increased reporting demands.

IV. Summary of national reports submitted for the ninth session of the Forum

A. Overview

10. At the time reporting, 16 countries, including 11 developing countries or countries with economies in transition and 5 developed countries, had made submissions: Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Cyprus,[4] El Salvador, Finland,[4] Gabon, Ghana, Jamaica, Mexico, Mozambique, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Slovakia and Switzerland.

11. National reports indicated that many of the countries listed above had introduced or strengthened policy, institutional and normative measures and other actions supporting the implementation of the forest instrument and the global objectives on forests, while others were in the process of doing so. These efforts were seen as building on existing initiatives aimed at implementing the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, as well as previous resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests. Some countries reported that many of the elements of the forest instrument were already part of their policy and legislative frameworks for achieving sustainable forest management, emphasizing national forest programmes, plans and related strategies as useful vehicles for taking forward the instrument.

12. The interconnections and the crossover between the global objectives and paragraphs 6 and 7 of the forest instrument were reflected in most national reports. In addition, numerous actions reported as contributing to a particular global objective had contributed to the implementation of one or more of the instrument's provisions. Overlap across the four global objectives was also evident, with some actions reported under one global objective often seen as relevant to the achievement of another. Furthermore, countries reported on governance and related policy matters linked to provisions of the instrument.

[4] Cyprus and Finland, noting that their national reports for the eighth session of the Forum were still valid, provided updates.

13. National submissions, available at the time of reporting, are posted on the Forum website.[5] Although the responses are relatively limited in numbers, they give a valuable indication of the broad range of actions taken. The present report is also complemented by information from other sources, including regional and subregional inputs that are also available on the Forum website.[6]

14. Among the country reports, that submitted by Ghana described its pilot project on the implementation of the forest instrument. While raising the awareness of stakeholders in the country about the forest instrument, Ghana carried out an assessment of the current situation regarding the implementation of the instrument. The results provide a helpful baseline for monitoring progress on implementation and for reporting to the Forum. A monitoring system, drawing on existing tools in the forest sector, is currently under development. Lessons learned from this pilot project are presented below as an example of how the forest instrument can serve as an important mechanism for coordination with other national policy processes. Further details of the project will be announced at the ninth session of the Forum.

B. Ghana pilot project: assessment of the implementation of the forest instrument

15. In 2008, Ghana became the first country to systematically implement the forest instrument, with technical support provided by FAO and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, and funding from Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The project entitled "Moving forward in the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests" was aimed at identifying Ghana's gaps, strengths and weaknesses with respect to the national policies and measures set forth in the forest instrument, as well as determining priorities and initiating programmes needed to address gaps and weaknesses.

16. The project, which was launched in 2009, resulted in the following:

(a) A project steering committee, with representation from stakeholders in the forest sector, was established to review project activities and provide advice on issues related to implementation;

(b) Regional stakeholder workshops were organized to raise awareness among forest users and others and to help assess Ghana's implementation efforts in relation to the forest instrument;

(c) Outcomes of regional workshops were utilized at a national stakeholder workshop;

(d) The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission began collaborating with civil society organizations (such as CARE and the World Wildlife Fund), traditional authorities and private sector institutions (including the Ghana Timber Association), and initiatives such as Ghana's voluntary partnership agreement with the European Union, to engage in dialogue and review progress on project implementation.

[5] See http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff9.html.

[6] See http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff9.html#regions.

17. In regional and national stakeholder consultations, the following four areas referred to in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the forest instrument, and initial "catalytic" activities related to each area, were identified as priorities for making progress on sustainable forest management:

(a) **Promote cross-sectoral coordination.** Activity: enhance the visibility of the forestry sector's contribution to national development planning;

(b) **Strengthen forest law enforcement.** Activity: enhance the watchdog role of communities in combating corruption and other illegal activities;

(c) **Develop financing strategies for sustainable forest management.** Activity: enhance the access of local stakeholders to funding sources that support socio-economic activities in the forestry sector;

(d) **Integrate national forest programmes into relevant national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.** Activity: enhance the capacity of district assemblies in the development and implementation of district forestry programmes.

18. Stakeholders also identified three thematic areas as cross-cutting issues requiring priority attention: (a) gender, (b) education and (c) science and technology. A monitoring system is currently being pilot-tested in two forest districts with a view to the implementation of the initial catalytic activities relating to the four priority areas. An evaluation system is also being pilot-tested.

19. The following challenges in implementing the forest instrument were identified:

(a) Insufficient funding and human resources to carry out collaborative forest management, to build capacity for resource management, to improve infrastructure and to strengthen law enforcement capacities;

(b) Widespread poverty among rural forest-dependent communities, many of which lack viable alternative forms of livelihood;

(c) Unsustainable agricultural practices resulting in the loss of forest cover, owing to the lack of a suitable land-use policy framework to address the impacts of agriculture on forests.;

(d) Lack of effective inter-ministerial collaboration to harmonize conflicting land-use policies (for example, conservation and the bushmeat trade). Many of the drivers of deforestation are outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission;

(e) Limited natural resource accounting in the national budget to capture the contribution of the forest sector to national development.

Lessons learned

20. Although the pilot project is still in its early stages, it is clear that the forest instrument has the potential to provide an overarching and integrated framework and performance assessment tool for national action and international cooperation related to the forests of Ghana. Through the pilot, the instrument has already served as an effective framework for:

(a) Engaging stakeholders and raising public awareness;

(b) Developing forest sector monitoring and evaluation systems;

(c) Developing a database of existing forest-related policies, structures and initiatives.

21. The lessons learned from the pilot project have been documented and shared at national and international forums and will be highlighted at the ninth session of the Forum. The approach taken by Ghana has shown promise for application in other countries. Three countries, in Africa, Latin America and Asia, will shortly join the pilot effort. Broadening these efforts to additional countries, however, will depend on international support and funding availability.

C. Progress towards the global objectives on forests and related actions identified in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the forest instrument

Global objective 1: reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation

22. The Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 provides up-to-date information about the state of the world's forest resources. Forests currently cover 31 per cent of the Earth's land mass. Rates of deforestation, including in particular the conversion of tropical forests to agricultural lands, have decreased over the past decade, from 16 million hectares per year in the 1990s to a current average of approximately 13 million hectares per year. Nevertheless, deforestation rates remain alarmingly high, particularly in South America and Africa. Large-scale tree planting has significantly reduced the net loss of forest area, which declined from 8.3 million hectares per year from 1990 to 2000 to 5.2 million hectares per year from 2000 to 2010. Today, planted forests account for 7 per cent, or 264 million hectares, of the total forest area, reflecting an increase of approximately 5 million hectares per year from 2005 to 2010. In addition to the conversion of forests to agricultural lands, forest fires, pests and diseases, natural disasters, conflicts in forested areas and invasive species have been major causes of deforestation and forest degradation.

23. Following are examples of actions described by countries in their national reports, to attain global objective 1 and carry out activities set out in the forest instrument (for example, in its paragraphs 6 (o) and 7 (d), (h), (i) and (j)). A number of the actions have contributed to the attainment of other global objectives:

(a) Forest legislation has been enforced to prevent change in land use. National plans have been prepared for the control and prevention of forest fires, with an emphasis on protecting forests from fires. For Cyprus in particular, this has included reinforcing traditional preventive measures with more advanced technologies, including an automatic fire detection system. Some countries reported on actions taken to protect forests from other health hazards. For example, Mexico reported on measures to assess the impact of pests and diseases on forests, as well as plans to adopt appropriate response technologies;

(b) Efforts have been made to promote reforestation and restoration of degraded forested lands, including those affected by forest fires, with a particular focus on priority watersheds. Brazil reported that it had expanded its planted forest area from 350,000 to 650,000 hectares, while Mozambique reported on the reforestation of approximately 35,000 hectares from 2005 to 2009. The massive

reforestation project in Mexico, being carried out through a comprehensive policy, planning and programming approach, includes the updating of the national forest programme 2001-2006; a strategic forestry programme concluding in 2025; a public awareness and reforestry programme for 2007-2012; an institutional programme for 2007-2012; and a revision of the forest finance strategy whereby substantial funds are committed to the forestry sector, including for projects implemented by local authorities and communities. Other examples include the extension of forest cover through afforestation, particularly on private lands, which has helped to reverse forest cover loss in countries such as Cyprus. In the case of the Philippines, examples related to strategies on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and on the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+) were reported as being carried out with respect to all four global objectives. In Mozambique, reforestation activities generated 8,000 jobs during the period 2005-2009, and large-scale commercial forest plantations have been established in several areas;

(c) Mechanisms for strengthening participation by stakeholders, in particular women, to reverse the loss of forest cover were reported;

(d) Improvements in forest monitoring mechanisms were also mentioned as useful for the accurate identification of trends in the gain or loss of forest cover. El Salvador, for example, is attempting to raise funds to enable it to conduct an inventory of its forest resources, while the Philippines has adopted national criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and an audit system to assess the performance of its forest management unit. The Philippines is also conducting national inventories of forest resources in ancestral domain sites.

24. For several countries, a well-conceived national forest programme, underpinned by strong national legislation, has served as the foundation for effective action to reverse the loss of forest cover, while others cited the importance of forest law enforcement in addressing illegal logging and the illicit trade in forest products. Other developments include recently developed national reforestation and afforestation policies in Bangladesh and Mozambique, with the latter country promoting reforestation through a new presidential initiative and public forest awareness campaigns. Cyprus cited its efforts to adequately fund rural development programmes in order to promote forest protection and expansion, while Papua New Guinea reported on the development of a new reforestation policy connected to a plantation development programme.

25. Despite efforts in support of global objective 1, Papua New Guinea reported forest replenishment impediments arising from resource constraints. Also highlighted was the need for funding to empower indigenous peoples in terms of both technical and scientific and traditional modes of monitoring forest areas. Reported causes of the loss of forest cover include the expansion of the agricultural frontier, urban development, forest fires and large-scale logging with little reforestation.

Global objective 2: enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people

26. According to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010, the annual value of wood removals remained unchanged from 1990 to 2000, rose by 5 per cent

annually from 2000 to 2005 and then dropped sharply. They were valued at just over $100 billion per year from 2003 to 2007. The reported value of non-wood forest removals was approximately $18.5 billion in 2005, with food products accounting for the greatest share of that amount. However, as a result of limited reporting by countries, the value of non-forest products remains underestimated. Approximately 10 million people are employed in forest management and conservation but many more are directly dependent on forests for their livelihoods. The Assessment also indicates that the management of forests for social and cultural functions is increasing, but that the area in question is difficult to quantify. Soil and water conservation is the primary objective for 8 per cent, or approximately 330 million hectares, of the world's forests.

27. Following are examples of reported actions to attain global objective 2 and carry out activities set out in the forest instrument (for example, in its paragraphs 6 (d), (f), (j), (l), (s), (v), (w) and (y) and 7 (k)). A number of the actions have contributed to the attainment of other global objectives:

(a) A range of conservation, utilization, industrialization and marketing activities have been promoted in order to generate economic benefits for local communities and support sustainable forest management. Several countries cited efforts to reduce poverty in forest-dependent local communities;

(b) Indigenous peoples' rights and rights-based approaches have been promoted, as well as activities related to free, prior and informed consent processes and the identification of safeguards. In this regard, the Philippines emphasized spiritual and cultural bonds to forest areas. The integration of indigenous community policies into local ordinances and legislation and the strengthening of indigenous communities' representation in local development councils were also highlighted. In addition, practices in managing conflict over natural resources, as well as the establishment of basic policies to increase the resiliency of indigenous communities in defending their territories in order to achieve peace and security, were cited;

(c) Brazil reported that more than 10 million hectares of new indigenous areas were recognized, that 6 million hectares of land had been designated to enable local communities to work on the sustainable management of forest products, and that 3 million hectares of sustainable settlements had been established;

(d) Certification processes for wood products have been adopted. Brazil reported that it was promoting the national and international certification of forest products to enhance their marketability. Brazil has also established a system to guarantee minimum prices for community-based forest products. Similarly, the Philippines reported the establishment of a computer-based lumber/timber origin certification monitoring system to track the transport of forest products. A system for non-timber forest products is also being developed;

(e) On the basis of an assessment of forest recreation demands and needs, Cyprus has identified important sites for forest recreation, providing financial support for those most suitable (camping and picnic sites, nature trails and botanical gardens) for both local residents and visitors;

(f) Public awareness-raising and education campaigns on the economic benefits of forest goods and services have been strengthened. The Philippines, for example, has been conducting educational and communication campaigns among

the general public and expanding capacity-building activities on sustainable forest management, including active participation in the Social Forestry Network of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations;

(g) Several countries reported on mechanisms for promoting the participation of stakeholders, in particular the private sector, local communities and women, in forestry development, including through the application of environmentally sound technologies. With the support of the European Union, Papua New Guinea has developed an eco-forestry programme that promotes community participation in the use and management of forest resources. The financing of the initiative has been assumed by the national Government;

(h) The competitiveness of forest products has been enhanced through measures to improve their quality. Gabon, Mexico and Papua New Guinea, for example, stressed the importance of making the transition from the exportation of logs to diversification and the processing of wood products with added value. In the case of Gabon, Ghana and Mozambique, bans on log exportation have been implemented in order to stimulate local processing. Cameroon, as a country in the Congo basin, reported on the need to address the small contribution of forests to the national economy;

(i) A number of countries reported the establishment of programmes in which local stakeholders pay for ecosystem services to support the protection of forests.

28. In many countries, national forest programmes and strategies have provided the framework for action to achieve global objective 2. El Salvador is revising its national forest policy and forest legislation with the aim of balancing the country's demand for forest goods and services with the conservation of ecosystems that allow for sustainable social and economic development. In Cyprus, Mexico and Mozambique, rural development policies and plans have been useful in promoting forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits that have helped to improve livelihoods in local communities. Similarly, other countries, including Jamaica, have made use of local forest management committees. The Philippines noted the development of a forestry information system to monitor the performance of forestry tenure holders vis-à-vis the terms and conditions of their forestry agreements with the Government.

Global objective 3: increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests

29. The Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 indicates that legally established protected areas account for 13 per cent of the world's forests. The amount of forest area within protected-area systems has increased by nearly 63 million hectares since 2000. Twelve per cent, or more than 460 million hectares, of the world's forests have been designated as suitable for biodiversity conservation, with nearly 44 million hectares being set aside during the period 2000-2005. The Assessment also indicates that the amount of forest area covered by management plans, an important tool for sustainable forest management, has been increasing, although information is available for only 80 per cent of the total forested area. Currently, 1.6 billion hectares of forests are covered by management plans.

30. Following are examples of reported actions to attain global objective 3 and carry out related activities set out in the forest instrument (for example, in its paragraphs 6 (e), (p), (q) and (x) and 7 (d) and (g)). A number of the actions have contributed to the attainment of other global objectives:

(a) The establishment of protected areas, including national parks and reserves, has helped to increase the protected forest areas in various countries. Brazil reported that the total area protected by the federal Government had expanded from 67 million to 74 million hectares. Finland reported that an additional 10,000 hectares of public lands would be protected by 2010 and between 178,000 and 272,000 hectares of private forests by 2016. Cameroon stated that it planned to increase its permanent forest estate from 40 per cent to 55 per cent of all forested areas over the next few years. Ghana has redesignated forests as globally significant biodiversity areas;

(b) In placing priority on ensuring effective participation by local communities in implementing management plans for protected forest areas, Bangladesh plans to assess the performance of local communities and to prepare case studies in that regard;

(c) Forest sector employment measures in the Philippines have included action to hire more than 50,000 individuals as forest guards to carry out forest protection activities in order to address untenured land;

(d) El Salvador is revising its national forest policy to promote the sustainable management of forests, particularly in key watersheds;

(e) Cyprus has focused efforts on rehabilitating degraded protected areas and has undertaken the revision of management plans for both protected and other forest areas. Cyprus has also developed plans for the monitoring of selected ecosystems, habitats and species;

(f) Mozambique has conducted a survey of the status of forest reserves to identify priority needs in improving their management;

(g) Gabon reported that more than 3 million hectares of forests had been protected, that approximately 2 million hectares had been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and that a total of 6 million hectares were being sustainably managed. Mexico is committed to increasing its total area of sustainably managed forests by 7.92 million hectares during the period 2007-2012. Similarly, Mozambique reported on plans to expand its sustainably managed forest area. Gabon and Mexico also cited their participation in forest certification processes;

(h) New Zealand has maintained a steady total area of forests under conservation, including approximately 5 million hectares of indigenous forests, through measures including regulatory processes, the establishment of voluntary criteria for sustainable plantation forest management, third-party certification, voluntary industry approaches to the sourcing of legal timber and wood products and the prevention of illegal logging, and programmes to raise community awareness of legality issues.

31. Finland and New Zealand are contributing to the attainment of global objective 3 by providing financial assistance to developing countries for projects aimed at the protection, conservation and sustainable management of forests, the development of

plantation forests to ease pressure on protected areas, and the development of market-based mechanisms to reduce deforestation and forest degradation.

32. Actions in support of global objective 3 have been carried out as part of national forest programmes in most reporting countries. Supportive national legislation on protected areas and wildlife has provided the legal basis for increasing the protected areas in Cyprus, El Salvador and Mexico and the number of sustainably managed forests in Gabon.

Global objective 4: reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management

33. Following are examples of reported actions to attain global objective 4 and carry out related activities set out in the forest instrument (for example, in its paragraphs 6 (i) and 7 (a), (b), (c) and (e)). A number of the actions have contributed to the attainment of other global objectives:

(a) In terms of bilateral cooperation to support sustainable forest management, Finland reported on its support for neighbouring countries, including the Russian Federation. New Zealand cited its financial and in kind support for sustainable forest management in developing countries, provided through its Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, primarily by way of core funding for international organizations. Switzerland highlighted its support provided through the implementation of projects aimed at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) in Colombia, Indonesia, Ghana and Madagascar, as well as its active participation in the interim REDD+ partnership work programme. Switzerland also mentioned its support, provided through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, for a number of forest projects in developing countries;

(b) Since 2006, Cyprus has evolved from being an aid recipient to being an aid donor. It is increasing its official development assistance (ODA) through 2015, at which time its ODA should reach 0.33 per cent of its gross national income. Its ODA strategy for 2006-2010 identifies agriculture and the environment, including forestry and environmental protection, as one of three thematic areas for assistance;

(c) Recipient countries such as Bangladesh, Gabon and Ghana are actively seeking funding from diverse sources, including the World Bank, the International Tropical Timber Organization, bilateral development agencies and regional development banks. Mozambique has reached finance agreements with Finland, to support the implementation of its national forest programme for 2009-2013 with €11.44 million; with Japan, to support its REDD programme with $7 million; and with others. From 2007 to 2010, Papua New Guinea mobilized resources from bilateral development agencies and international organizations and simultaneously committed its own resources to fund REDD+ pilot projects. The national REDD+ strategy of the Philippines includes a sustainable financing component to encourage and enforce significant reductions in forestry sector emissions;

(d) Mexico has established a programme in which payments are made for forest ecosystem services. It includes a forest fund to stimulate investments in sustainable forest management that supports production, conservation and

rehabilitation activities in the forest sector. The Philippines also recognized payments for ecosystem services as a mechanism that could help to finance sustainable forest management. In addition, the need to provide incentives for indigenous peoples to protect watershed areas serving other communities was mentioned;

(e) Brazil has established a number of funds that support the forest instrument, including the Amazon Fund and the Forest Development Fund. Gabon has established a national forest fund and a project to establish payments for forest ecosystem services. Ghana is also developing a forest investment programme;

(f) El Salvador is working closely with the private sector to stimulate investment in sustainable forest management. The Philippines noted activities under way through the Forest Investment Forum and actions to promote investment in natural forest management, forest products processing, climate change mitigation in relation to forests, and other environmental services. Corporate social responsibility and the importance of inter-agency cooperation and coordination in traditional forest management systems were also reported.

34. Several of the measures implemented by countries have been developed with technical and financial support provided by international, regional and bilateral development agencies and organizations.

D. Progress from a cross-cutting perspective

35. At the time of its adoption by the General Assembly in September 2007, the forest instrument was available in all six United Nations official languages. If it is to be effectively implemented at the national level, the instrument must be available in a country's official language(s). Among the 16 countries that provided national reports for the ninth session of the Forum, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cyprus, Finland, the Philippines and Switzerland have official languages other than those of the United Nations. Of these countries, Finland and the Philippines have translated the instrument into their official languages.

36. Paragraphs 6 and 7 of the forest instrument refer to a number of governance-related national and international policies, measures and actions not explicitly mentioned in the global objectives on forests. Some of these may be viewed as cutting across the four global objectives. A number of countries reported actions taken in the following areas, as well as under the global objectives. Since the actions are mentioned above in the context of specific global objectives, a brief summary has been provided for each.

National forest programmes, plans and strategies

37. In many countries, national forest programmes reflect political commitment to sustainable forest management. New Zealand reported on the adoption of a broader approach, comprising a matrix of policies, plans and industry initiatives that are periodically updated as required. Brazil and Ghana reported progress in promoting cross-sectoral coordination on forests in national development planning. Moreover, national forest policies are often formulated and implemented in close cooperation with regional processes. Forest policies, plans and strategies were mentioned as being prepared or revised by several countries:

(a) Finland revised its 2009-2011 strategic programme for the forest sector in 2008, adopted development policy guidelines for the forest sector in 2009 and revised its national forest programme in 2010;

(b) Jamaica has adopted a strategic forest management plan 2010-2014;

(c) Cameroon has developed an industrialization plan for the forestry sector that includes sustainable forest management;

(d) Cyprus is currently preparing a new national forest policy and programme;

(e) The Philippines is currently revising its forest policy (the Sustainable Forest Management Act).

Forest legislation

38. Various countries have undertaken or are undertaking revisions or amendments to strengthen national forest legislation, particularly in terms of governance and law enforcement. El Salvador cited special attention to illegal logging and commerce in forest products. Gabon and Papua New Guinea referred to stringent forest law enforcement policies. Mexico reported having opted for a preventive, rather than a punitive, strategy. A number of African countries cited the importance of signing a voluntary partnership agreement with the European Union on the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan. Mozambique has prepared a manual on promoting law enforcement legislation related to forestry and wildlife. Bangladesh and Brazil are assessing or will asses law enforcement performance, with Bangladesh preparing case studies. Mexico has encouraged private sector participation in certification programmes as an approach to supporting forest law enforcement. The Philippines has intensified forest protection and law enforcement activities in coordination with other law enforcement agencies, local government units, civil society and other stakeholders. In this regard, the Philippines emphasized that the collective implementation of forest law enforcement and governance and related trade processes was essential to ensure the attainment of the global objectives.

Stakeholder participation

39. A significant number of countries have continued to strengthen stakeholder participation through measures implemented since before the adoption of the forest instrument. Bangladesh, Cyprus, El Salvador, Ghana and Mexico reported that they had institutionalized stakeholder participation, with Bangladesh and the Philippines focusing on social forestry and co-management activities through reforms to national forest legislation. El Salvador is establishing a forest consultative board through new forest legislation, and the Philippines is revising its laws on sustainable forest management to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples and their enjoyment of their rights.

40. El Salvador reported that it was working with the private sector and industry to create a more favourable environment for forestry investment. Jamaica reported that a few forest reserves and forest management areas had been established on private lands. In the case of Bangladesh, dialogues with the private sector and industry have been organized to help address conflict resolution. Mexico has strengthened its strategic partnerships with both national and international financial institutions,

while also developing new innovative funding mechanisms and strengthening partnerships with the private sector. In New Zealand, nearly 100 per cent of the timber produced comes from plantation forests, most of which are privately owned. Cameroon is studying how to better utilize forest sector income to fund sustainable forest management. El Salvador is focusing on improving the investment environment for sustainable forest management, including through investment incentives.

41. Many countries reported on mechanisms or initiatives, including capacity-building initiatives, to increase the involvement of indigenous local communities in sustainable forest management programmes. To that end, Bangladesh and the Philippines have prioritized the identification of alternative income-generation activities for indigenous and local communities. New Zealand has set up a fund aimed at the preservation of indigenous knowledge linked to the use and management of natural resources, including forests. A number of countries are addressing the protection of indigenous peoples' legal rights with respect to forest management, including intellectual property rights.

42. As a priority, Bangladesh and Cameroon are monitoring institutional performance regarding stakeholder participation, with Bangladesh conducting a cost-benefit analysis; results are being provided through case studies. Papua New Guinea noted that, despite increased stakeholder participation, there had been little improvement in the livelihoods of people in local communities.

Capacity-building

43. Greater emphasis has been placed on capacity-building, including promoting the participation of country-level staff in training programmes. Among the examples reported: El Salvador has supported more efficient use of fuelwood in rural homes, Gabon has established a woodworking school, and Mozambique has conducted training in the implementation of forest and wildlife legislation for State and community law enforcement agents. Gabon and Mexico have more closely linked their work on capacity-building and technology transfer with that carried out by academia and the Philippines, through community knowledge-sharing workshops and field manuals. Cyprus and Finland are reviewing and restructuring their forestry organizations in order to more effectively address new and emerging issues.

44. Several countries reported on the strengthening of collaboration with universities and research centres. Mexico, for example, has established a fund aimed at catalysing forest research and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, particularly those that contribute to the added value of processed forest products, while Switzerland has initiated a research programme on the impacts of climate change on forests. Other developed countries reported on activities to support capacity-building initiatives in developing countries, often through regional and subregional programmes.

Public awareness-raising and education

45. Public awareness-raising programmes have been launched in several countries. Bangladesh has organized a tree fair, and Cameroon has initiated an information and awareness-raising campaign on its voluntary partnership agreement with the European Union, with similar activities being carried out in the Philippines. Ghana has developed communication strategies that are delivered in the country's local

languages. Mozambique has conducted a public awareness-raising and education campaign on preventing and combating forest fires, while Cyprus has undertaken a study on the planning and conduct of an information campaign on forest fire prevention. Gabon and the Philippines are intensifying activities in this area.

46. Local forest management committees have been critical in promoting public awareness and education on sustainable forest management. However, there is still a need for greater resources and more partnerships with stakeholders, including increased media involvement. Major challenges include reaching adult audiences more effectively and educating the public about the value of forest goods and services.

Monitoring, assessment and reporting

47. A number of countries described monitoring, assessment and reporting activities carried out in the context of regional programmes or projects. Several other countries highlighted measures to conduct national forestry inventories, while a few others reported on the development of forest information management systems. Ghana has established a monitoring and evaluation unit within its forestry commission, including the development of a website for information-sharing. Gabon and Jamaica reported a lack of adequate monitoring, assessment and reporting capabilities.

48. The development of policy guidelines for the forest sector was cited by one country as a means to direct international support for sustainable forest management. Other countries, including Cyprus and Mexico, highlighted existing policy frameworks for addressing monitoring, assessment and reporting functions. In many cases, the strengthening of expertise and capacity in the area of project design was a high priority, in particular to increase access to global financing mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility and proposed REDD mechanisms.

E. Challenges encountered

49. Similar to the challenges described in the context of Ghana's pilot project, obstacles and impediments in implementing the forest instrument, especially financial constraints and greater impacts arising from the unpredictable global economic situation, were identified by developing countries Finland, for example, identified the current global economic situation and structural changes in its forestry industry as key challenges. Bangladesh, Cameroon, Gabon and Mozambique cited inadequate resources as a major restraint on their capacity to achieve sustainable forest management. Other key points included the need to:

(a) Strengthen institutional capacities in the forestry sector;

(b) Resolve conflicting interests among local, state and federal governments;

(c) Revise and strengthen forest legislation;

(d) Train forestry personnel;

(e) More effectively address intersectoral conflicts;

(f) Increase and diversify the economic benefits of forest goods and services for small-forest owners and indigenous communities;

(g) Develop accounting and valuation systems that take into account forest goods and services;

(h) Resolve unsettled land tenure issues;

(i) Strengthen forest monitoring capabilities;

(j) Overcome inadequate means of implementation;

(k) Provide assistance to indigenous peoples.

F. Lessons learned

50. Among the lessons learned in implementing the forest instrument, the following were highlighted:

(a) National forest plans, supported by sound forestry legislation, continue to serve as effective vehicles for the sustainable use of forest goods and services;

(b) Existing criteria and indicators with respect to good forest management practices provide a coherent and useful reference framework for sustainable forest management;

(c) Positive results supporting sustainable forest management have been achieved from meetings with local communities on the establishment and application of mechanisms for the adequate valuation of the costs and benefits of the services provided by forests;

(d) National tree-planting events have helped to raise public awareness of the importance of managing and protecting of forest resources and their biological diversity;

(e) Monitoring and analysing the relationship between cross-cutting concerns regarding forest law enforcement and governance and related trade processes and the Forum's thematic issues and sustainable forest management objectives are essential to ensuring the effective implementation of the forest instrument.

G. Support provided by regional and subregional organizations

51. In the annex to resolution 7/1, on the Forum's multi-year work programme for the period 2007-2015, relevant regional and subregional forest-related entities are invited to address issues and agenda items planned for each Forum session, including progress made in implementing the forest instrument and the four global objectives on forests. Fifteen regional and subregional entities submitted reports for consideration at the Forum's ninth session. Most inputs recognized the forest instrument as an important international achievement in the promotion of sustainable forest management. Similarly, the four global objectives have been taken into account in regional policy decision-making and implementation through various entities. Many entities reported on activities that had directly contributed to the implementation of the forest instrument and the global objectives. For example, a

draft protocol to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, on sustainable forest management, takes into account the forest instrument and the four global objectives. The draft protocol will be considered for adoption by the States parties to the Convention in 2011. A synthesis of these reports will be provided in the report of the Secretary-General on regional and subregional inputs (E/CN.18/2011/3).

V. Future reporting

52. The tasks for future sessions of the Forum, as laid out in the Forum's multi-year programme of work for the period 2007-2015, will require innovative approaches if the reporting burden on Member States is to be prevented from growing. Future reporting opportunities with respect to the Forum also include the provision of input to the process related to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012 (Rio+20 Conference). In addition, the tenth session of the Forum, in 2013, will focus on the overall theme of forests and economic development. At its eleventh session, in 2015, the Forum will review, inter alia, progress in implementing the forest instrument and the contribution of forests to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. To assist the Forum in its 2015 review, the Forum secretariat has been requested to prepare, in collaboration with FAO, analytical consolidated reports based on, inter alia, voluntary country reports.

53. Information provided by Member States in voluntary national reports will therefore make an essential contribution to the Forum's discussions in 2013 on forests and economic development and to its assessment and review in 2015, as well as to other relevant processes such as Rio+20 and post-2010 activities related to the Millennium Development Goals. In view of the fact that relatively few countries submitted reports for the ninth session of the Forum, the following activities to facilitate future reporting are planned or under way, in accordance with paragraphs 2 (b) (i) and 4 (c) of the resolution adopted by the Forum at its eighth session:

(a) On the basis of experience gained through voluntary national reports submitted in 2008 and 2010 using suggested formats, the current reporting format will be further streamlined and integrated, drawing on existing forest reporting formats and indicators, so as to reduce reporting burdens while still generating the information needed for consolidated analysis. In consultation with FAO and with other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the secretariat will prepare guidelines for streamlined national reporting for the Forum's tenth session;

(b) Germany is providing support, through FAO and the National Forest Programme Facility, for three additional pilot projects on the implementation of the forest instrument in Liberia, Nicaragua and the Philippines, building on experience gained through the Ghana pilot project;

(c) Japan has agreed to contribute up to $1.59 million to assist interested countries in reporting, for the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Forum, on progress made in the implementation of the forest instrument. The project is expected to begin in March 2011 and will be implemented by FAO, in close collaboration with the National Forest Programme Facility and the Forum secretariat;

(d) The Forum secretariat is planning a four-year project (2012-2015) to be implemented through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, under the United Nations Development Account in the amount of $527,000, to help strengthen national reporting in support of the implementation of the forest instrument.

VI. Conclusions

54. The voluntary national reports submitted during the preparation of the present report reflect the interconnections between the global objectives on forests and the forest instrument, as well as interlinkages among the global objectives. Actions reported as having contributed to the attainment of a particular global objective are also relevant to the implementation of one or more aspects of paragraphs 6 and 7 of the instrument and, in many cases, have contributed to the attainment of other global objectives. Furthermore, reporting revealed a number of governance and related policies and actions that cut across the four global objectives.

55. Most countries that have submitted reports are introducing or strengthening measures and other actions to implement the forest instrument, including by attaining the global objectives on forests, through, inter alia, reforestation and forest restoration, efforts to address threats to forest health, improved governance and law enforcement, and increased stakeholder participation. These measures and actions often build on existing initiatives to implement the previous proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and more recent resolutions and decisions of the Forum. Therefore, elements of the forest instrument may already be reflected in forest-related legislative and policy frameworks for achieving sustainable forest management, such as national forest programmes and plans and related strategies.

56. As the Ghana pilot project indicates, the forest instrument can provide a useful overarching framework for national action and international cooperation aimed at sustainable forest management. It has shown promise for application in other countries as well: three countries, in Africa, Latin America and Asia, will soon join the pilot effort. Donors are to be congratulated on their support for this comprehensive approach. Countries stand to learn a great deal through such an in-depth and comprehensive systematic method of implementing the forest instrument and the four global objectives. Broadening these efforts to additional countries, however, will depend on international support and funding availability.

57. Developing countries generally face a range of obstacles in implementing the forest instrument and achieving its purpose. These include financial and human resource constraints and the inadequate valuation of forest goods and services, as well as challenges linked to improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people and increasing the economic benefits of forests through the added value of the local processing and manufacturing of forest products. The fragmentation within Governments of responsibility for forests is a major reason for some of the gaps in implementation.

58. Voluntary reporting by a significantly greater number of Member States will be needed in 2013 and 2015 to permit an overall assessment of progress. While a number of initiatives by donors and the Forum secretariat in this regard are planned or under way, significant additional financial support will be required so that all requests can be responded to.

59. In view of the scope of the assessment and review to be conducted in 2015, additional voluntary contributions to the Forum trust fund will be needed in order to support the secretariat's efforts to prepare analytical consolidated reports and other background materials requested by the Forum.

VII. Recommendations

60. The Forum may wish to:

(a) **Decide that voluntary national reporting for the tenth session of the Forum will focus on the overall theme of forests and economic development;**

(b) **Welcome the initiatives by Germany, Ghana, Japan, Liberia, Nicaragua, the Philippines, FAO, the National Forest Programme Facility and the Forum secretariat to pilot the implementation of the forest instrument and assist countries in reporting progress;**

(c) **Invite members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and request the Forum secretariat to enhance efforts to support, on request, the efforts of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to prepare voluntary reports for the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Forum;**

(d) **Invite FAO to consider how it can further incorporate, into its reporting on the state of the world's forests and on the Global Forest Resources Assessment Programme, the elements of the forest instrument and the global objectives on forests aimed at efficient reporting by Member States;**

(e) **Encourage donor countries and other countries in a position to do so, financial institutions and other organizations to make voluntary financial contributions to the Forum trust fund to enable the Forum secretariat to effectively assist, on request, developing countries and countries with economies in transition in preparing voluntary reports for the Forum's assessment and review to be conducted in 2015;**

(f) **Encourage Member States and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to initiate and support, as requested by Member States, additional pilot projects on the implementation of the forest instrument.**